

I claim:

1. A method for shipping temperature-sensitive goods comprising the steps of:
receiving, as a provider, an order from a customer for a shipping container designed to hold temperature-sensitive goods;
ascertaining from the order an appropriate number of appropriately-sized containers needed by the customer;
delivering the ascertained appropriate number of appropriately-sized containers to the customer;
loading the goods into the container;
determining alternative logistical solutions for delivering the goods based on constraints dictated by the customer;
allowing the customer to select the logistical solution by which the goods will be delivered from the determined alternative logistical solutions;
implementing a shipping schedule based on the logistical solution selected by the customer;
undertaking to deliver the goods to a desired location according to the shipping schedule;
monitoring, via shipment tracking data, the undertaking to deliver the goods according to the shipping schedule;
maintaining communication access to the shipment tracking data;
delivering the goods to the desired destination;
unloading the shipping container;
retrieving the container; and
making the container ready for future use.
2. The method of claim 1 in which the undertaking to deliver the goods is performed by the provider.

3. The method of claim 1 in which the undertaking to deliver the goods is performed by the customer.

4. The method of claim 1 in which the undertaking to deliver the goods is performed by a third party.

5. The method of claim 1 in which the monitoring of the undertaking to deliver the goods according to the shipping schedule is performed by the provider.

6. The method of claim 1 in which the monitoring of the undertaking to deliver the goods according to the shipping schedule is performed by the customer.

7. The method of claim 1 in which the monitoring of the undertaking to deliver the goods according to the shipping schedule is performed by a third party.

8. The method of claim 1 in which the maintaining communication access to the shipment tracking data is performed by the provider.

9. The method of claim 1 in which the maintaining communication access to the shipment tracking data is performed by the customer.

10. The method of claim 1 in which the maintaining communication access to the shipment tracking data is performed by a third party.

11. The method of claim 1 in which the making the container ready for future use includes cleaning the container.

12. The method of claim 1 in which the making the container ready for future use includes inspecting the container.

13. The method of claim 1 in which the making the container ready for future use includes

cooling a heat sink material.

14. The method of claim 1 in which the making the container ready for future use includes heating a heat source material.

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